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OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** GOVERNOR  
**FROM:** RILEY  
**SUBJECT:** NAEP SCIENCE SCORES TO BE RELEASED AT 10:00 (EST) ON TUESDAY, NOV. 20  
**DATE** 11/19/01  
**CC:** MAYO  
SEWELL

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The 2000 science NAEP scores are being released by NCES/USDE tomorrow morning at 10:00 EST. Here are a few highlights from the report in case we get any phone calls from the press. The following information is embargoed until 10:00 tomorrow:

- Results for the 2000 science assessment showed no significant change in grades 4 and 8 and showed a 3-point decline in grade 12 performance since 1996.
- There was no change between 1996 and 2000 in Grade 4 of students attaining any of the achievement levels (advanced, proficient, basic, or below basic). There was a slight increase in Grade 8 of students reaching the *Proficient* level or beyond (29% in 1996 increased to 32% in 2000). At grade 12, the percentage of students at or above *Basic* declined between 1996 (57%) and 2000 (53%).
- Mississippi's state Grade 4 average of 133 was below the national average of 148.
- Mississippi was one of 13 states that had lower average Grade 8 scale scores than the national score. Mississippi had a Grade 8 average of 134, while the national average was 149 in 2000. However, Mississippi's 2000 average of 134 had improved one point over our 1996 average of 133 (1996 national average was 148). Other southeastern states with lower than the national average score included TX, LA, AR, AL, GA and SC.
- Approximately 250,000 students participated in the assessment: 50,000 in the national assessment and 200,000 in the state assessment.
- The assessment focused on three fields of study: earth, physical and life sciences.
- There were few changes between achievement level results by gender. The number of males in Grade 8 at or above *Proficient* increased between 1996 and 2000. But, the number of Grade 12 male students at or above *Basic* declined.

- There has been little change in science achievement of racial/ethnic subgroups between 1996 and 2000. White 12<sup>th</sup> graders showed a decline in the percentage of students at or above *Basic*. No other changes were statistically significant. Achievement gaps between whites and black and Hispanic students remained relatively unchanged since 1996.
- According to Gary Phillips, Interim NCES Commissioner, the decline in scores seemed to be in the central part of the country and among higher socio-economic students.
- While teachers' undergraduate major was not related to performance at Grade 4, 8<sup>th</sup> graders whose teachers majored in science education had higher average scores (155) than students whose teachers had not (151). This is why it is important to have well trained and qualified teachers in our classrooms.
- At grade 4, results show that 4<sup>th</sup> graders whose teachers reported using computers for playing learning games had higher scores (153) than fourth graders whose teachers did not (149). Likewise for 8<sup>th</sup> graders, students whose teachers used computers for simulations and models or for data analysis had higher scores (155 for simulations; 156 for analysis) than students whose teachers did not indicate doing so (151 for simulations; 150 for analysis).